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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; JANUARY 27, 2010

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo
ROK North Korean Rights Groups to File Petition with International Criminal Court against the North's Alleged Human Rights Violations

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Dong-a Ilbo
Head of Korean Teachers and Education Workers' Union Participated in Minor Opposition Democratic Labor Party's Policy Decisions as Member of the Party

Hankook Ilbo, Segye Ilbo
Beginning This Year, Foreign Language and International High Schools to Select Students Based on Middle School English Grades and Interviews

Hankyoreh Shinmun
ROKG's Plan to Build History Museum Faces Opposition for Alleged History Distortion

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to an ROK military official, North Korea has declared two areas in the waters south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the Yellow Sea, the de facto maritime border between the two Koreas, to be "no-sail" zones from Jan. 25 until March 29. (All)

ROK military authorities have activated close surveillance to see if the North's declaration is part of its winter military training or a preparation to test-fire short-range missiles. (All)

According to the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry, an employee at the North Korean Embassy in Ethiopia defected to the ROK last October seeking asylum. (All)

The Foreign Ministry will form a task force in the first half of this year to help North Korean defectors staying in foreign countries enter the ROK. (Seoul)

According to Defense Ministry officials, the ROK will dispatch hundreds of troops to quake-hit Haiti next month as part of UN peacekeeping operations. (KBS, Yonhap)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

All ROK media covered North Korea's Jan. 25 declaration of two areas in the waters south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the Yellow Sea, the de facto maritime border between the two Koreas, to be "no-sail" zones from Jan. 25 until March 29.

Most media noted that it is the first time that North Korea included the ROK waters in the no-sail zones, and interpreted this as a possible indication that Pyongyang is attempting to challenge the disputed naval border using a new tactic.

According to media reports, ROK military authorities have activated close surveillance to see if the North's declaration is part of its winter military training or a preparation to test-fire short-range missiles.

-Afghanistan

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo, in an inside-page article entitled

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"U.S., U.K. Make Conciliatory Gestures toward Taliban," reported that U.S. and U.K. military leaders indicated the possibility of peace talks with the Taliban. The report quoted Gen. David Petraeus, head of the U.S. Central Command, as telling The Times: "The concept of reconciliation, of talks between senior Afghan officials and senior Taliban or other insurgent leaders, perhaps involving some Pakistani officials as well, is another possibility." Gen. Stanley McChrystal, commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, was also quoted as saying when asked whether he would be content to see Taliban leaders in a future Afghan government: "I think any Afghans can play a role if they focus on the future, and not the past."

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun filed a similar report, writing in the headline: "'Sticks and Carrots' to Taliban... U.S. Sets in Motion Afghanistan Exit Strategy."

STEPHENS